



# Planning Your Move Toward a Standards-Based Curriculum

## Why go this route?

- Because Michigan standards are what Michigan educators have decided our children need to know.
- Because people who are asked to change practice need to know the “big picture” of why Michigan is using statewide standards.
- Because our work is more meaningful if we have tight connections between learning goals and standards (curriculum), teaching methods (instruction) and measurements we use to tell when children have succeeded (assessment).
- Because when curriculum and assessment are not aligned, what is actually tested is socio-economic status.

## You'll know you've arrived when...

- Staff members can define standards in their own words.
- Staff can explain the advantages of a standards-driven curriculum.
- Staff knows where the school is on its standards' journey and has made a plan for the next steps.
- Parents have gotten answers to their questions about standards and can explain in their own words why they matter.
- Students can explain what they are studying at any given time and what standards they are expected to reach.

## Construction Zone

### It's about *TIME*


- Aligning curriculum may be a year-long process if you are doing it yourself without a district-provided pacing guide. Be patient with yourselves; it needs to be done.
- Getting a shared big picture and making a plan for a reasonable “next step” can be completed in 2-3 hours at staff meetings or retreats.

### Potential *COSTS*

- Parents' Night might require \$100 of materials.
- Released time or substitute coverage might be required to allow staff to work on the process outlined here.

## The Process

*A step-by-step guide to planning  
how to move steadily toward  
standards-based teaching and  
learning practices.*

**NOTE:** Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

### 1 As a group, read and discuss information about standards.

We have included in this packet a number of reprinted articles about standards-based teaching and learning that explore the question of “*Why Standards-based Education?*” from different angles. We suggest a “jigsaw” approach in which 3 groups of staff members each read a different article and work together to summarize the main points. One member of each group joins 2 others who have read different articles, and they trade information from their reading.

### 2 Use “Terms of Endearment” at a staff meeting.

This handout (INSERT for step 2) is a fun way to check your knowledge of high-level standards. Allow time for dialogue.

### 3 Ask staff to locate the school’s current status along the standards journey.

INSERT for step 3, “Developmental Sequence,” lists activities and milestones most schools go through on their journey toward everyday use of standards.

### 4 Agree on a timeline for “next steps”.

Given your location on the “Developmental Sequence,” what seems a good next step? INSERT for Step 4 offers an action-planning tool on which staff can list the set of activities that seem reasonable targets for completion during the school year. Then set goals and timelines.

In general, the steps listed in the “Developmental Sequence” move through work outlined in Steps 5-8 below. Most are elaborated upon in a separate packet, as noted.

### 5 Agree to practice standards-based lesson planning.

MI-Map Packet 6:2, “*Grounding Lessons in Standards*,” outlines steps for a teacher (or grade-level set of teachers) to identify the standards being mastered in a given lesson, teach and assess those standards and then debrief the experience—learning what went well and what to do differently next time. Commit—as a grade-level team or a whole faculty—to try it together and be accountable for reporting your experience to the community.

### 6 Work to involve everyone in the community in understanding how standards are being used to make instructional choices.

Include parents, students, secretaries, custodians, aides and food workers in the movement toward daily use of standards. It helps to ensure that the language begins to permeate newsletters, meetings, parent-teacher conferences, assemblies and hallways. INSERT for Step 6 offers a short activity that can demonstrate what a standard-driven lesson feels like.

### 7 Agree to build cross-disciplinary units that address multiple standards at a time.

MI-Map Packet 6:3, “*Creating Standards-based Units*,” suggests a process for selecting a theme capable of consolidating multiple standards in several disciplines, choosing the appropriate ones, and teaching and assessing mastery of them. Many experienced users insist this is the ONLY way to approach a curriculum as comprehensive as Michigan’s in the limited time available in a single school year. As in Step 5, agree together to try this and discuss it.

### 8 Build a tracking system capable of recording levels of mastery for individual students for specific standards.

MI-Map Packet 5:3, “*Knowing Your Goals*,” outlines a MS-Excel spreadsheet-based method for keeping track of which students have mastered which standards, so that unit planning can address gaps as they become apparent, and next year’s teachers will know where they stand.

## Getting more mileage from planning for a standards-based school

*Thinking together about how to move toward deeper commitment to using standards to drive instruction benefits for your school in regard to the following initiatives:*

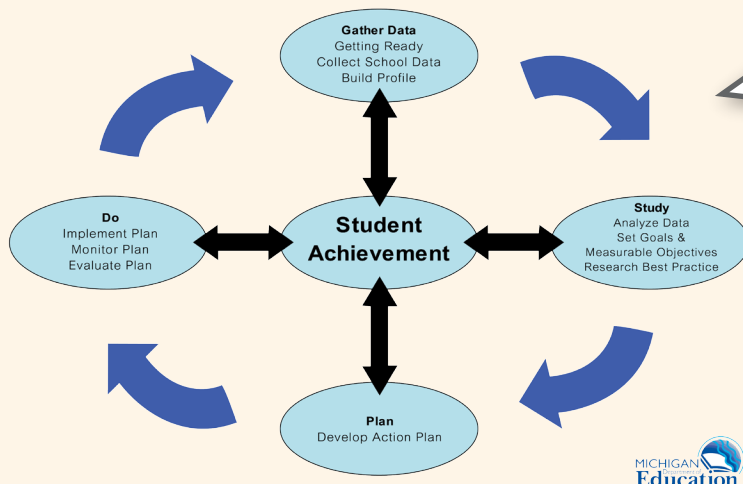
### **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**

- ESEA's requirement for annual statewide assessment of student achievement means that Michigan's standards will form the basis of that state assessment. This will be the basis for calculating a school's AYP score.

### **State Accreditation System**

- A major component of each school's report card is assessment data on student performance based on Michigan's standards.

### **Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process (Mi-CSI) Michigan School Improvement Framework**



This packet will assist schools as they work on Strand I, Teaching for Learning. It provides schools a process to ensure that their curriculum is aligned to the state standards.



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## Resources

### *Books, Articles, Websites*

#### **Unwrapping the Standards**

Larry Ainsworth M.S. *Lead and Learn*, 2009.

Shows teachers how to identify and “unwrap” standards so they know exactly what to teach students.

#### **Aligning and Balancing the Standards-Based Curriculum**

David A. Squires. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2005.

Full of field-tested practices, diagrams, sample lessons, assessments, and case students, this book shows how schools and districts can use the Balanced Curriculum process to put their schools on the path to success.

#### **Common Core Website**

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

#### **Michigan Department of Education Standards Website (Common Core)**

[http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530\\_30334\\_51042-232021--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_30334_51042-232021--,00.html)

#### **The Teaching for Learning Framework**

<http://www.teachingforlearning.org/>

The Teaching for Learning Framework, a project of the Michigan Department of Education – Office of Education Improvement and Innovation, was created to support effective instruction in challenging content across all grade levels and content areas.

### *People*

Intermediate School Districts/RESAs can serve as a resource.

#### **For more information, contact:**

Michigan Department of Education

Office of Education Improvement and Innovation  
517-241-3147

School Improvement Unit  
517-373-8480

Curriculum and Instruction Unit  
517-241-4285

Office of Assessment and Accountability  
517-373-0048

Office of Early Childhood and Family Services  
517-241-3592

Office of Field Services  
517-373-3921

Office of Professional Preparation and Teacher Certification  
517-373-6505

Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services  
517-373-9433

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